

## AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME

A Meeting of Council will be held at the NZ Deerstalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton, on Saturday 14 December 2019 commencing at 11.30am

### AGENDA

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\* Denotes attachments

**M. Young**  
**Chairman**  
26/11/2019

**AUCKLAND/WAIKATO FISH & GAME COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual General Meeting of the Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council at the NZ Deer Stalkers Hall, Wairere Drive, Hamilton on Saturday 17 November 2018, commencing at 11.00 am

**PRESENT:**

**Chairman:** M. Young

**Councillors:** G. Annan, G. Avery, D. Cocks, N. Juby, B. Moore, C. Sherrard, S. Smith, E. Williamson.

**Staff:** B. Wilson, J. Dyer, A. Sintenie, A. Daniel.

**Visitors:** P. Hardy, J. Atkinson.

**1. APOLOGIES:**

A. Kerr, W. Howard, M. Davis, D. Klee, R. Tyson, G. Brocklehurst, P. Shaw, P. Fuller.

It was moved;

that apologies be accepted.

Annan/Smith CARRIED

**2. MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 9 DECEMBER 2017:**

It was moved;

that the minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Annual General Meeting on the 9 December 2017 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Cocks/Annan CARRIED

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

Councillor Annan advised that the dairy farm at Toa Bridge on the Waipa River was still on the market. Discussion followed on the large number of dairy farms currently for sale and possible reasons for this.

Councillor Annan informed that Russel Gaston was very appreciative to receive his Merit Certificate from Council. Mr Gaston died a few days after receiving his award.

4. **ANNUAL REPORT:**

Extensive discussion took place on the role and recent performance of the NZ Council. It was noted that the NZ Council spent much of its time meeting in public excluded sessions and this did not always appear to be justified and gave the appearance of a lack of transparency.

Concerns were also expressed over the continued low level of communications from the NZ Council to the regions. In reply to a question from Councillor Annan, Mr Wilson agreed that no justification had been received from the NZ Council for their decision to decline the Auckland/Waikato bid for extra funding for the RMA officer position.

Councillor Williamson expressed his disappointment at the lack of consultation by the NZ Council regarding proposed structural changes to the organisation. Furthermore, there had been no meaningful consultation with regions over the proposed changes to the dates for the receipt of draft budgets and funding applications, which will effectively mean that Council would have to approve the draft 2019/2020 budget at its February meeting rather than in April as in previous years.

It was moved;

*that the NZ Council be informed of the concerns of the Auckland/Waikato Council over the lack of transparency, poor communications with regions, and the proposed structural review.*  
*Cocks/Williamson CARRIED*

It was moved;

*that the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Council be adopted.*  
*Young/Annan CARRIED*

5. **GENERAL BUSINESS:**

Mr Atkinson spoke at length of his concerns regarding the stalling of the NZ Council in dealing with issues arising from Section 23 of the Wildlife Act 1953 (sale of game and sale of shooting rights prohibited). Mr Atkinson stressed that something needed to be done soon as otherwise there would continue to be controversy and trouble as was currently occurring in the Hawkes Bay Region. Councillor Sherrard replied that the Hawkes Bay issues were being dealt with by the NZ Council, and that the issue has been discussed in committee.

In reply to a question Mr Wilson stated that in the next game season there would be five properties with special conditions in the Auckland/Waikato region. Councillors agreed that there had been some benefits to local hunters with pheasant releases, but Councillors remained opposed to the commercial hunting of mallards and any commercialisation of trout fishing.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 12pm.

CONFIDENTIAL

Chairs  
Fish and Game Councils

28 November 2019

Dear Chairs,

Thank you for attending the Governor's joint meeting with the New Zealand Fish and Game Council on Saturday 23 November in Christchurch.

I am writing following up the conversation we had on Saturday afternoon regarding media communications and to let you know of a resolution made by the New Zealand Council.

The New Zealand Council resolved:

1. *Agree to a scientific randomised survey using an independent agency, to establish views of licence holders on Fish and Games freshwater advocacy. Note NZC to sign off questions proposed by the polling company.*
2. *To internally survey all governors using the same questions as in recommendation 1.*
3. *Agree to come back to the next NZC meeting with a recommendation on the future approach to freshwater advocacy taking into account recommendations 1 and 2.*
4. *Agree that before the report back to the next NZC meeting, the CEO and staff will not proactively make media statements which contain negative statements about farmers.*
5. *Agree the CEO and staff can make reactive media statements including responding to reports that are consistent with our last 6 months on freshwater advocacy.*
6. *Agree to investigate the establishment of national environmental awards to highlight good farming practice that is consistent with our position on the NPS-FW.*
7. *Agree to take out recommendations into the public minutes.*

The New Zealand Council also resolved to send a draft NZ Council Communications Strategy for regional feedback in your Council's public excluded session. NZC will be writing to your Council separately regarding this consultation.

Yours sincerely,



Lindsay Lyons  
Chair

*Statutory managers of freshwater sports fish, game birds and their habitats*

## Bi Monthly Managers Report

### Auckland/Waikato Fish & Game Meeting December 2019

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#### OUTPUT 1: SPECIES MANAGEMENT

##### Project 1115 Population Surveys

**Spawning Habitat map:** Adam has been conducting spawning surveys of Waikato streams to identify spawning areas to create a spawning habitat map that will be used to increase protection on spawning rivers. To start this work Adam collected all available data, from 1940 onward, and entered it into a GIS database to map the current extent of trout habitat and spawning habitat. Old reports, online databases and Regional Council data were used. The original spawning habitat map has not been found and the council trout habitat map is not correct or up to date.

Going forward Adam Daniel will survey streams without data using drift dives and electrofishing and ultimately produce a series of maps that will be gazetted as trout spawning or trout habitat maps. It is likely this will take multiple years unless technology such as EDNA are developed.

Waders and wader boots were purchased for the summer intern that will be assisting with electrofishing.

##### Project 1121 Harvest Survey

Five hundred tags were ordered for the wild trout tagging program.

##### Project 1161 Trout Releases

50 tagged fish were released in lake Moana-nui for the kids fishing day using the tanker and release pipe. The annual Arapuni release was conducted with 2000 1-year-old rainbows released.

##### Project 1172 Game Gazette

David compiled the game regulations review and staff recommendations

##### Project 181 Gamebird Control

Pukeko have been invading market gardens and crops with 29 permits issued during September and October. Ducks have been less of a nuisance with 4 permits issued to disturb.

#### OUTPUT 2 HABITAT PROTECTION/MANAGEMENT

##### Project 1211 R.M.A.

**Healthy Rivers Plan Change 1 update:** Anna prepared closing legal submissions, which included a complete version of the marked up plan change sought by Fish and Game as an

Appendix. This was reviewed by Sarah Ongley and submitted. Commissioners have indicated their recommendations will be released this year, but we are unclear whether this will be influenced by the progress on the National Freshwater Action Package.

**Waikato District Plan:**

**Stage 1:** The hearings are progressing and have been broken into approximately 25 Streams, with 6 of these being held this year. For each hearing stream, a 42A Report is released which details whether our submissions are recommended to be approved or rejected by the Council Officers. Anna is reviewing these reports as they come out, collating the parts relevant to Fish and Game and making a determination on the usefulness of appearing. So far, submissions processed have related to either very technical or very general matters. We have had some general submissions rejected but intend to follow these up in their relevant context at later hearings.

The bulk of the submissions relevant to Fish and Game earthworks and restoration will fall under hearings in the new year. Ben will attend one hearing this year, relating to ‘definitions’.

The proposed rezoning at Ohinewai has been re-notified so that the community can advance further submissions and attend a dedicated hearing in the new year. We resubmitted our further submission to ensure that we captured the submissions of all parties seeking rezoning.

**Stage 2:** The Council released stage 2 of the WDP as a draft for feedback for one month. This Stage of the plan relates to natural hazards and includes hazard maps. Mostly this did not relate to Fish and Game concerns, however we will need to watch the flooding provisions. Stage 2 of the plan will be notified in the new year.

**Thames Wastewater Treatment Plant:** The Thames Coromandel District Council are updating this plant, without significant upgrades at this stage. Our concerns are: ensuring that the contaminant output doesn’t increase; and that they appropriately manage avian botulism. Records at the site indicate there have been issues in terms of avian botulism in the recent past, and this has not yet been considered as part of the consenting process. We have raised these concerns with the applicant however they have lodged their application and intend to refine the conditions of their consents later in the process. As a result, we lodged a general submission in opposition, effectively, seeking to have some input on consent conditions as these are drafted with the WRC.

**Waitomo Wastewater Treatment Plant:** THL have approached us again seeking waiver to enable them to lodge a non-notified application to continue their discharge to the Waitomo River for a further 7 years. In April 2018 Anna had declined to waive Fish and Game’s right to have a say on the application due to a lack of demonstrated improvements to the discharge over the 7 years applied for. Consent conditions were sought but never provided. The site has a significant non-compliance record and is operating under an old consent which expired several years ago. THL has indicated in a TOR document that they will make significant upgrades to operations in a future long-term resource consent application after the 7 years expires. However, THL’s tenure at the site over the long term is unclear. Information online indicates that their agreement to lease the premises from iwi expires in 7 years. In the meantime, the WWTP serves (for the large majority) commercial operations at Waitomo. We would want to see the site conform to the requirements of the NPS and the Vision and Strategy, which is that it contributes to proportionate improvements in the catchment, rather

than further decline. Adam has discussed this position with THL and informed the WRC and iwi.

**National Developments:** The latest RMA amendment Bill was consulted - it makes updates for the Freshwater Package and will effectively reverse the latest changes to the RMA made by the previous government. One expected reversal pertinent in our Region is the reinstating of developer contributions. Consent authorities will again be able to charge financial contributions from April 2022. Developer contributions can address the direct impacts of a development and are a helpful tool in light of extensive subdivisions projected in the northern Waikato, likely to impact nearby reserve spaces (eg at Ohinewai).

The Government has also released the Resource Management Review Panel's first "issues and options" paper for a more holistic review of the RMA.

**Kinleith discharge:** Consultation with Oji Fibre Solutions over their discharge from the Kinleith Pulp & Paper Mill continued.

**Lake Waikare Section 128 feedback and liaison group meeting:** David submitted feedback on the proposed Te Onetea gate consent conditions and implementation plan seeking some relatively minor changes to those proffered. We are yet to hear back from ICM to determine whether they have accepted. At the liaison group meeting the following topics were canvassed;

- **Pungarehu stabilisation work:** The first 1.1km has been completed and further design plans are underway for the remainder of the canal. These will be presented to the group at the next meeting and will likely include a mix of soft and hard engineering solutions.
- **Te Onetea gate update:** A discussion around the proposed consent and implementation plan. At this stage ICM had not been able to review our feedback.
- **Sediment Baseline:** Some of the further technical information made available through Tonkin and Taylor who are managing the project on behalf of ICM. Further work has been done on the sediment baseline to inform monitoring and whether reductions are being achieved. Some issues discovered with other sediment inflows from catchment sources making the current monitoring site at farm bridge less likely to be appropriate. This may require an extra monitoring site at canal outlet.
- **Consent Compliance:** Generally on track with a few delays.

If anyone is interested any detailed reports or confirmed meeting minutes please contact David.

**Open Country Dairy:** We lodged a submission opposing this application to discharge treated effluent into the Waitoa River, which was not consistent with our MOU with OCD earlier this year. The Council Officers (contracted from Becca) have made significant requests for further information since then which has resulted in updates to the proposal. We have received some updated information and the application now pledges to reduce the maximum summer low flow discharge by 15% over what was originally being sought. We are yet to see any updated consent conditions that substantiate this, but regardless even if those reductions were translated into conditions of consent the new proposed summer discharge would still have significant effects. For example, the new modelling indicates an anticipated average 30-40% increase to instream Phosphorous concentrations some 5km downstream of the discharge point during summer months. It is difficult to reconcile these changes with the



agreements made in the MOU signed with OCD that required improvements in water quality. This application will progress to a hearing with evidence due early in the new year. We will wait to see what stance the regional council take on the application in the section 42 A report, due out in a few weeks.

**Lumbercorp meeting:** David attended a submitter meeting to discuss application progress. Lumbercorp have agreed to build extra storage treatment facilities and plan to do so this summer. The extra storage ponds will greatly reduce the need to discharge and largely address contaminant loading into the adjoining drainage system. There are still some issues to work through such as a general tightening of consent conditions and further detail in the proposed monitoring plan to ensure compliance, but generally the updated application is a vast improvement with some critical information gaps filled, eg. water balance modelling to determine adequate storage capacity. A further meeting is proposed for Max Birt in the coming weeks and given the two operations are inextricably linked it will be important to get some consistency and to ensure the monitoring is enough to determine which consent holder is responsible for any potential future contamination.

**Comprehensive consents:** David provided written feedback for the annual work plans prepared by the Waikato Regional Council for 3 Zones and Piako comprehensive consents. There are still some issues with the functionality of these consents and lapsed timeframes for the implementation of some of the mitigation measures. Accurately determining the exact level of effect is still problematic and makes it difficult to determine the adequacy of mitigation measures proposed. There is also currently a lack of any information relating to the success of mitigation that has been done which makes it even more difficult to determine its efficacy.

Subsequently David also attended a meeting to discuss the draft wetland and waterway enhancement plan which is a requirement of the Lower Piako consent. This plan is some years overdue and we are awaiting a final spatial map of potential sites. A couple of options were proposed at the meeting on WRC land. The greatest potential for wetland restoration in the Piako Catchment is on DOC land and we are hopeful that DOC will be amenable to looking at projects at some of the historical wetland areas which are currently being leased for grazing.

#### **Project 1221 Council Land**

**Williamson Wetland:** David removed some of the traps from the wetland that were not being used. The traps were given to another group who are actively trapping parts of the Kopuatai wetland.

**Wetland Audit:** The recent staff audit of F&G land by John has identified a number of issues, which are now being addressed, several maimais were not marked up and the reasons for this have since been established with one pond now relinquished and one maimai due to be demolished. Others with OSH issues, such as dodgy stairs and/or floors are being brought up to speed.

A sizable leak in the Cathcart Block is being reassessed for possible repair. A proposal to protect a stopbank adjoining the Central Shepherd Block from allowing in silt-laden Whangamarino derived floodwaters has been identified and the adjoining landowner to be consulted.

**Medical Emergencies:** F&G staff have been working with the Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust to ensure that we can accurately call in medical help if we need to in our somewhat out of the way places. It was learnt the Trust's pilots use a slightly different set of coordinates, (degrees and decimal minutes), rather than an ordinary GPS, (degrees, minutes, seconds and decimal seconds). It is planned to have a cleared landing point at each of 3 main F&G wetlands, (Dean, Piggott and Cocks), and signage on-hand detailing to anyone calling 111 in a medivac how to describe that exact paddock in the middle of nowhere.

For similar reasons, most farms now also have "rapid numbers", which are usually based on a certain distance from the road end closest to the main post office for the area. (e.g. #472 is 4.72km from the road end). However, many of the Fish & Game wetlands have no house, no letterbox and in some cases no road access either. The Rapid Numbers that have been assigned to us, when we looked closely at them, were often quite irrelevant, bearing no relationship with the actual point of entry. F&G staff are now working with Waikato District Council to register with them actual access to each of these wetlands so that an ambulance, if called, would not just go to the end of Wattle Road, for instance, and have no idea where-to next. Rapid Numbers can also be printed on a small sign, available from the district council, that can be conspicuously mounted on fence posts at key entry points. The existing F&G sites are currently being reviewed by WDC at our request and with our input.

**North Shepherd Wetland:** The comments below for the Piggott Wetland apply in part to this block where the object is to ensure that all the stopbanks which are drivable are being maintained that way by removing encroaching willow and obstructing pampas in particular. Electrix are shortly to do some willow clearing work around 2 of their pylons here. Their access to do such maintenance and also for F&G volunteers for working bees will be much the easier if ready access is kept open.

**Piggott Wetland:** The Auckland Botanical Society visited this property as a field trip, (their second at this site), and perhaps 20 or so members turned up. The large kahikatea stand was their chief port of call and Mr Dyer showed them around the various parts. Neighbour Jan Butcher organised this trip and nothing but good feedback was heard, with one gentleman saying that "I had no idea Fish & Game did so much good work". With so many plant experts on hand, (including the Auckland Museum botanist), it was a perfect opportunity to get a variety of species identified in the block including one of the littlest; to be precise, the world's smallest flowering plant. Wolffia is not unlike a small duckweed and ducks eat it in large quantities, so it is a very welcome plant.

Adjoining this wetland is a wastewater treatment plant and until quite recently the final treatment pond there was massively infected with alligator weed. Fortunately, it has recently been subject to a large-scale spray. However, as we are downstream of this and subject to flooding across our relatively low stopbank fragments of this plant have previously found their way into our block and taken hold. A number of bridgeheads by this species have been sprayed out but several new ones have cropped up where vehicle access has only recently been restored by Neil Rankin where scours in the stopbank had made driving impractical there until recently. Those of us who work on wetlands will also know that if you disturb soil pampas grass frequently takes hold and this rapidly growing plant can itself soon prevent vehicle access.

The new ponding on the "dead creeks" is another example where the spoil of these has recently compacted enough to be driven on, but the pampas has wasted no time in-between

establishing itself. Much of this has been sprayed hard since but left in its wake is another plant, Glyceria. Fortunately, this weed is susceptible to a mixture of 100ml Glyphosate/20ml wetting agent to each 10-litres water. However, with so many flax left growing in close proximity, a calm day is needed to address this – once the pampas has died back sufficiently for vehicles full of spray to easily pass once again, that is.

### **Project 1231 Other Land**

**Lake Hotoananga:** A number of traps, baits and automatic Goodnature Traps have been acquired for a group of keen hunters who want to undertake pest control at “Magazine Lake”, (Lake Hotoananga) in the Waikato. Fish & Game arranged this through DoC Waikato who very generously granted something like \$1,600+ of trapping supplies to which we have added some of what we had on hand ourselves. Of course, it is not just gamebirds that benefit from such activity but bittern and other endangered species as well. So it is a win-win-win, with DoC getting free volunteer help to help reach their targets too.

**Pukekohe WWTP:** John met with Watercare in Buckland, at the annual stakeholders meeting to discuss progress with the Pukekohe/Tuakau Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade. Since there was just one member of the public there, we got to have some useful input! Chief among our concerns was botulism and how to prevent it. The possibility of diverting some of the plant water into the original pond there, which is still a wildlife refuge, was discussed and is now being investigated. This would reduce the risk of water temperatures there climbing and oxygen levels collapsing, both of which set the scene for a potential botulism outbreak. There are many hundreds of waterfowl that use this pond and, should one become sick and then die on one of the adjoining ponds the whole place could easily become a disaster zone which has happened in the recent past.

Botulism is something that will crop up one year at a wastewater treatment pond and then may or may not the following year. Even Watercare water quality scientists closely monitoring the water conditions cannot predict it. However we learnt from this stakeholder meeting that the old Waiuku plant is soon to be replaced with a new one, Clarks Beach, (where we have had bad botulism in the past), is to be closed and Pukekohe’s major new upgrade is going operational in the very near future. All of which is good news in terms of better water quality and less botulism risk.

### **Project 1241 Assessment and Monitoring**

**Lake Otamangakau:** Adam has continued to follow up on the Lake O discharge and water samples and has begun to do stream gauging on the streams monitored in the water quality study.

**Koi Carp:** Adam investigated a possible koi incursion for eastern region south of Arapuni.

## **OUTPUT 3 PARTICIPATION**

### **Project 1311 Access negotiation**

**Whakapapa Intake Road:** This access issue has become stagnant with Walking Access NZ failing to get DoC Taupo to respond. Walking Access NZ has not been that effective in opening access to date. DoC administer the easement on the road and need to inform the

landowner that the gate should be open to driving access. Adam has raised the issue with the national office requesting that they push DoC to maintain access as promised.

#### Project 1341 Other Publications

**Whakapapa:** Reel Life has been focused on communicating the Whakapapa Intake issue as we have received many angry calls on the lack of access.

### **OUTPUT 4 PUBLIC INTERFACE**

#### Project 1431 Liaison advocacy

**Club Talks:** Adam was invited to give a talk at Hamilton Anglers and the Awakino Stream Care group.

**Check Clean Dry:** Adam attended the national refresh meeting in Auckland to expand and renew the program.

**Avian Botulism Symposium:** David was one of the keynote speakers at the inaugural avian botulism symposium which John also attended. His talk focused on botulism management plans and practical interventions to help mitigate the size and scale of outbreaks. Most of the other presentations focused on bird recovery, handling and rehabilitation. There were a good mix of agencies present including most of the territorial authorities managing WWTPS in our region, many of whom David has already engaged with to develop plans for their plants. The symposium was organised and run by the SPCA, often not the biggest fan of duck shooting or hunting in general, but hopefully by highlighting the work we do through our RMA functions and field work to clean up botulism infected sites, we found some common ground. David did make the point to some individuals that if it weren't for hunting licence income, we couldn't do this work and that there were no other agencies working in the RMA realm pushing for botulism to be appropriately managed.

**Waipa Peat Lakes and Wetlands Meeting:** David attended this meeting which was well represented. Much of the discussion revolved around drainage issues and water level controls. It was agreed that it would be worthwhile to get more accurate measures of peat subsidence to take back to landowners as a way of showing why flood effects were becoming more prevalent around some of the lakes.

### **OUTPUT 5 LAW ENFORCEMENT**

#### Project 1511 Ranging

Adam has checked three anglers in Huntly. NZ police issued offence notices to two individuals at the blue springs walkway that were fishing without a licence and were in possession of drugs.

**B. Wilson,  
Chief Executive**